



State of South Carolina

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2005 "Healthy SC Challenge" Kicks Off **SC COUNTIES, COMMUNITIES TO ENGAGE IN FRIENDLY,** **OUTCOME-BASED HEALTH COMPETITION**

Columbia, S.C. – May 4, 2005 – Gov. Mark Sanford and First Lady Jenny Sanford today unveiled two new additions to the "2005 Healthy South Carolina Challenge," the "Healthy County Challenge" and the "Healthy Community Challenge." The twin fitness initiatives will put South Carolina counties and communities in friendly competition with one another to improve the health of their citizens. Specifically, the county and community organization that show the most improvement in a) reducing smoking, b) increasing physical activity and c) lowering BMI (body mass index) will be invited to the Governor's Mansion for a special Awards Ceremony next spring.

"That's not a typo – we're going to invite the entire population of the county that wins to a big party at the Governor's Mansion," Gov. Sanford said. "We think it's critically important that South Carolinians get more active and this kind of competition is a great way of raising the bar for everybody. It's outcome-based, which is what we're getting at with our health care prevention grants. We've got to a better job as a state of rewarding things on the front end that encourage healthier living, because ultimately that saves lives and can save our state millions in treatment costs on the back end."

Joined by mascots from South Carolina's colleges and professional sports teams as well as media personalities from across the state, the governor and First Lady kicked off the "Healthy South Carolina Challenge" by participating in an afternoon of healthy games and friendly competition at the Governor's Mansion. U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham's office also participated. The First Family escalated their efforts to promote healthier lifestyle choices among South Carolinians after recent reports indicated the poor condition of our state's health. A 2004 study by the Center for Disease Control found 61.3 percent of South Carolinians are considered overweight, while 24.3 percent of the state population smokes and 23.8 percent fail to engage in even the slightest physical activity. During the same period, the United Health Foundation ranked South Carolina's health 46th out of the 50 states.

"I'm very thankful that we can do something to make a difference in promoting better lifestyle choices," First Lady Jenny Sanford said. "I'd particularly like to thank the members of the media who came out today on behalf of their newspaper, radio or television station to help spread the message. We're going to offer an award to the media outlet that does the best job promoting healthier lifestyle decisions, too, because the more we spread this message the more South Carolinians are aware of how important this is to a better quality of life."

For more information on the "Healthy South Carolina Challenge" visit the website at www.healthysc.gov.

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